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THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

VALUE AND CAUSALITY

THE exchange of views¹ between Professor Urban and Mr. Schneider has impelled me to take from a pigeon-hole a paper written originally as a contribution to the discussion between Professor Sheldon and Professor Perry at the New Haven meeting of the Philosophical Association in 1913.² Some changes and additions have been made to connect it with the issue that has been raised by Professor Dewey's theory of value as it appears in his *Studies in Experimental Logic* and which appears to be the point on which Urban and Schneider amiably but vigorously disagree.

It is not surprising that the discussion of values tends to become more and more complicated. Four years ago at New Haven the issue was very clear-cut; it might have been named the place of realism *versus* the place of individualism in a theory of value. At that time realism was still a thing of experiment and adventure, while idealism, or whatever you like to call the type of thinking that still took subjectivism into account, was beginning to look decidedly conservative, and one of the interesting features of the meeting was that the realistic paper was read by one supposed to be, whether rightly or wrongly, an idealist (*pace suo*), while the position in which subjectivism is supposed to survive was defended by a militant realist.

Of these two papers, the former, by Professor Sheldon, gave a definition of value in which the ego, to use a term now sufficiently discredited to be safe, is entirely superfluous. Professor Perry took the opposite ground and assured us that "it is held at the present day with something approaching unanimity that value in the generic sense has to do with a certain constant called bias or interest."³ It is because this old issue crops up, as I think, in the Urban-Schneider discussion and it is because further discriminations are usually possible, and because that meeting at New Haven was a very pleasant occasion, that I revive its problem.

¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. XIV., pp. 701 and 706.

² This JOURNAL, Vol. XI., pp. 113 and 141.

³ *Loc. cit.*, p. 149.

I fancy we need no longer feel alarm at what may seem affinities with either realism or idealism. The traditional flavor of "subjective" and "objective" should not impel us to dialectical preferences. The out-door habit of mind has become so natural that the old bogey of labels is rather attractively amusing than otherwise. The above reference to a shop-worn antithesis is, accordingly, only to notice that it has found its place on the shelf of metaphysical curiosities.

As the more recent of the discussions I have alluded to began with a paper by Mr. Schneider, I will venture a word or two about that. Mr. Schneider's point of view is that of what might be called a pragmatic theory of value. This point of view is stated at some length by Professor Dewey in his article⁴ "The Logic of Judgments of Practise." Now this context limits the range of the discussion very precisely. Professor Urban could, I think, easily have pointed out that while many things about value do illustrate the logic of judgments of practise, other things do not, but just because they do not, they can not be recognized in a theory of value that is part of a theory of judgments of practise. In so far as value facts come within the region of intelligent behavior, Mr. Schneider's account is, I think, entirely acceptable. But may there not be much of value that falls outside that region? Mr. Schneider appears to assume that whatever is valuable is valuable for something. Of course whatever is valuable in the context of judgments of practise must be valuable for something, but surely many things are prized and enjoyed without reference to any utility or end or completed situation. I do not wish for a moment to dispute Dewey's and Schneider's analysis; I do, however, point out that their analysis applies only to the subject-matter that instrumentalism applies to, and this leaves out of account, I take it, one whole half of experience. I mean that instrumentalism, and its corollaries, applies to what has reference to the future; I do not see how it can apply to what we call the present when we disregard its causalities and potentialities. What I have in mind is the old contrast between beauty and use. Instrumentalism certainly suggests causality made use of, and the instrumentalist account of value, in the desire to escape the harmless bogey of subjectivism, tends, I think, to equate value with causality. The old problem as to the necessity of an appreciating ego in a value-generating situation seems to be making for the shelf too, but my paper was written when that problem might still be occasionally mentioned, and so my own remarks are conceived in a confessedly reminiscent vein. I shall use the word value in a sense quite the opposite to that preferred by instrumentalism, but a detail of usage is not, I

⁴ This Journal, Vol. XII., pp. 505 and 533; and *Experimental Logic*, pp. 349-389.

take it, the point at issue, and whether the word "value" is given one meaning or another no relevant fact will be modified, and the circumstances alluded to ought not to be obscured.

Instrumentalism is, it seems to me, realistic in an empirical or phenomenal sense (these terms imply nothing metaphysically), and idealistic in the sense that it is interested in human situations, activities, and methods. In the former respect, the instrumentalist theory of value is somewhat in line with Professor Sheldon's paper mentioned above, and in the second it moves in the atmosphere of Professor Perry's paper. While an instrumentalist may claim, I think, that the problem of the presence or absence of an ego does not concern him, he may claim this because he has already decided the question and decided it in favor of Professor Perry's position. The instrumentalist, as such, is primarily interested in the data of what I call below an ego-centric situation, but as an instrumentalist he is somewhat too indifferent to the non-instrumental data of that situation.

The idealistic thesis that the landscape is a function of the ego is familiar and historically intelligible. The thesis of the realist that the ego is superfluous for the landscape is equally familiar. It may be worth while to remember that, in any case, the ego and the landscape often do go together, and that when they do, the situation is not quite identical with what it is when they do not. Using Professor Perry's very neat adjective, the more complex of these two might be called an ego-centric situation. I need not insist that the ego-centric situation is an entirely empirical one with which no one of us is unfamiliar. The originality of Professor Sheldon's paper lay in his effort to emancipate value from ego-centric situations. Let us start, therefore, without assuming any ego, bias, or interest.

Let us conceive, imagine, or define a section of nature where there is nothing that can be aware of a preference or an aversion, no sentient organism that can feel pleasure or pain, comfort or discomfort, or any impulse whatever. The seasons come and go, vegetation thrives and starves in response to rain, sun, and drought. Everything happens that conceivably can happen except that nothing happens to an ego. Does not the term causality cover all the influences here of one thing on another? We can, to be sure, say that the rain is good for the ferns and desirable for the moss, and that the drought was very bad for the wild flowers. We can apply the terminology of value as much as we like and we shall not be misunderstood, for it will be clear that what we are talking about is causality. And it will probably be always more natural to say the rain is good for the crops than to say it is good for the weeds. In a strictly realistic world, however—realistic in the sense that it con-

tains no ego-centric references whatever—does not the word causality describe all the cases in which one thing can affect another? However we may specify or complicate cases of causality, are they, under these conditions, any less or any more than causality?

Now when we introduce a creature subject to bias or interest, impulse or preference, is anything new introduced, and what is it? Does something now happen that did not happen before? If there is now something new, the ego-centric situation calls for a new word, a word which, just because it denotes something that world number one did not possess, should not be applied to cases of world number one type. Things are not now merely causally effective; they are disagreeable and agreeable, sought or shunned for themselves and their effects.

If now something new is introduced when *bias* or *interest* is introduced, if the relation of things to this bias or interest is a new relation, that is, a relation to a new term, it is, of course, merely a question of terminology whether we indicate this new relation by one word or by another. Suppose we extend the term "value" to mean causality under certain definite circumstances not including necessarily any subject of interests or preferences; the word value can then not be used to designate the new relation, and another word will have to be found to do so. Nothing will have been done except to identify value with certain cases of causality and to adopt some other word to do the work that naturally belongs to this one. I can not help concluding, then, that the presence of *bias* or *interest* defines a type of situation where something happens that is not a case of causality merely. What happens is that things acquire value, and if the relation of things to interest and preference can not exist apart from ego-centric situations, what virtue can there possibly be in seeking to ignore this fundamental circumstance?

Another commonplace of the subject (as I had supposed) is the distinction between "intrinsic" and relative values. We experience, enjoy, or endure the present, we anticipate and seek to control the future. These may, to be sure, be viewed as different aspects of a complex present. The present is intrinsically as good and as bad as we find it, and it contains the resources, the causative or relative values that enable us to treat the future as an object of enterprise. This terminology should, perhaps, not be taken too literally; it should not be taken to mean that we value values and not things. Things are complex and acquire value from one property or another; when they do so they may be regarded often enough as individual instances of this property. But within the ego-centric situation intrinsic or immediate values may depend upon all sorts of circumstances, and a classification of them may be indefinitely complex. It is in-

trinsic values that are "matters of taste," the kind of thing about which disputing is likely to be futile and argument banal. I suppose no one will deny that there are individual peculiarities of taste, and it is quite certain that such peculiarities are most respected by those who have gradually achieved a capacity for varied appreciations.

The causalities of world number one persist, but they no longer influence merely indifferent facts; they are or may be causes of value and so acquire value from the intrinsic character of their consequences. The shortest and simplest word to indicate this new relation is, perhaps, the word "use." Is there anything singular in saying that "use" comes in with the "ego-centric" situation? With use, however, we are in a region of values where discussion is not irrelevant, because causality does not depend upon the ego-centric situation; only the value of causality depends upon that. The ego-centric situation added something to world number one; it did not take anything away from it. Man can not, of course, live in any portion of nature without being seriously interested in the mechanics of his environment, and we can and do study and debate the mechanics by means of which intrinsic values can be obtained. But what is thus studied and debated is mechanics and causality, not value in the strict sense.

Is one more interested in the quality of the present or in the potentialities of the present? The wise man is, no doubt, interested in both. Nevertheless, most of those that are really interested in either are not, as a rule, altogether "wise." Some there are who view things as a vision; others see in things the instruments and the raw material of change. The distinction above insisted upon, that of enjoyment *versus* use, may seem to be overcome in the fact that in actual experience the things that are useful or dangerous have in addition some esthetic quality, or may have; also that the esthetic value of anything is complicated by the future consequences it may reasonably be expected to produce, and that it is a corrupt taste,⁵ or at least a crude and inexperienced one, that is indifferent to a thing's "relative" value. This is, however, only to point out what is as obvious as anything else, namely, that things are complex and bear upon the future as well as exist in the present, and that taste is capable of education that does not contradict intelligence, but fortifies it. And it is equally clear that a community should make its instrumentalities esthetically tolerable, for if the present is never possessed, instrumentalities are a futile pretense. It is to the intrinsic values that sacrifices are ultimately due. In a greater or

⁵ Santayana in *Reason in Art*, p. 207.

less measure we are continually mutilating the present for the sake of the future, and compromising the future for the sake of the present. That is, we are constantly sacrificing value to use and use to value, and what makes the difference between these so real and so well worth marking is the fact that both the present and the future are such empirical actualities. All this may not be worth dwelling upon, but the distinction ought to be maintained in subsequent generalizations.

The distinction between value and causality will not remove or complicate the discussion of any genuine problem. Only such problems as might result from equating value with causality will be extinguished, and it is the apprehension that artificial problems might be created by a definition that must account for all this display of shop-worn goods.

What I have called relative values (instrumental values might be a better term) may seem to be a special case of those values that depend upon presuppositions. I may value and use a disagreeable medicine because it will cure a cold. I may like the Mona Lisa because Da Vinci painted it. These are, to be sure, both presuppositional values, but to class them together is to make a logical rather than an empirical identification. It seems to me their difference is greater than their resemblance. If I may venture to propose a pair of terms, I would suggest independent and dependent values; instrumental values would then appear as a particularly important class of dependent values. Dependent values are good for what can be gotten out of them, and there is nothing startling in saying that independent values are good for nothing. That does not mean that they have no value; it means only that they are the type and source of all value. And if I may repeat, the distinction between independent and dependent values does not in the least imply that things do not have both together. So many things are agreeable but harmful, disagreeable but beneficial; the attitude of esteem is so often spontaneous *and* complicated by various considerations.

Any one who studies the problems of value is likely to approach the topic with a dominant interest in either esthetics or ethics, an interest rather in what I have ventured to call the quality of the present or the potentiality of the present. The difference marks two temperaments that are likely to misunderstand each other unless the distinction between independent and dependent values is kept clearly in mind. Is truth a value? Perhaps. If we say that it is, I suppose we must mean that particular propositions have the one sort of value or the other, or both. It is when propositions acquire independent value that discussion becomes difficult. Certain it is

that one who comes to the subject chiefly from esthetics will give ample recognition to what I call independent values. This happens to be the case with the present writer. I do not know that it was the case with Professor Perry, but in his paper,⁶ the strong emphasis on independent or intrinsic value is accompanied by an illustration from the field of art. And when Mr. G. E. Moore is cited as denying the necessity of interest, the reference is to a work on ethics.⁷

This fact of special preoccupation leads to another consideration, which is that when a definition of value is attempted, the chances are that it is a case of some one seeking light in one direction or another, and it would usually be helpful to know in which direction the definition is intended to lead. For where the interest is genuine and the subject complex, where one is really thinking one's way ahead, it is not likely that one seeks to make a definition and let it go at that. There will be farther work to do, a great deal; the definition is only getting started. I should expect that those who are more interested in the potentiality of the present, in the control of situations by intelligent behavior, would take very kindly to definitions of value of the type proposed by Professor Sheldon. "Given any tendency, in dead nature, in living organisms, in conscious minds, which presses toward a certain end; any other tendency that furthers this is for it a good, and any that resists it is for it bad."⁸

A definition like this lends itself very well indeed to the interests of those engaged upon that aspect of experience called the future, but it is entirely useless to those engaged upon that other aspect, no less real, called the present. And in the interest of candor, I may add that the view I have stressed received such meager formulation as I have given it, not in the context of ethics where the ideas of intelligence, control, and direction are dominant, but in that of esthetics where one topic of empirical importance is the education of discriminating appreciation, the attainment of progressive connoisseurship, that possession of the present without which it is hard to see how there can be a real possession of anything.

It is only in the field of independent values that the great battles of taste can take place. One generation often hardly understands another. What would the public of Haydn have said to the music of Strauss? But the question of the comparative efficiency of different methods to bring about an objective change produces not a storm, but an experiment.

The emphasis upon independent values may seem, at first, em-

⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁷ *Loc. cit.*, p. 154.

⁸ Professor Sheldon's article, p. 121.

barrassing for philosophy, for philosophy is committed to discussion. Against that emphasis there is, says Professor Perry, "perhaps one fundamental motive after all; the desire, namely, to discover a criterion by which superiority or inferiority shall be assigned to values themselves—the desire to justify a criticism of the natural or empirical values. It seems to be necessary to provide for a scale or hierarchy in which inclination shall be subordinated to duty, impulse to a 'norm,' or enjoyment to an ideal."⁹ And elsewhere (p. 155): "The objectivity or commutability of judgments of value in some sense must be saved, not for the benefit of those debating societies, for which he (Santayana) has so poor an opinion, but in order that we may read and enjoy essays like his own, and understand him even when he says 'that good is not an intrinsic or primary quality, but relative and adventitious.'" But what are the values that can be justified or criticized? Evidently values of instrumentality. And what are the judgments of value that have any objectivity that can be conserved? Clearly, it would seem, judgments of dependent value, judgments which result from a consideration of consequences. But independent values are, so to speak, the premises of specific value syllogisms. They can not be criticized while they remain premises; the experiences that contain them must be construed from the point of view of their consequences, that is, they must be taken instrumentally, with reference to a future. Independent values can not be discussed; this is what gives a certain effectiveness to the sort of popular "pragmatism" that seeks to insure anybody's religious preferences. "For as Moore points out, if each party to the discussion is referring to his own interest, no two can ever be referring to the same thing. This is the genuinely vicious sort of relativism which puts an end to discourse, and is contradicted in the very act of generalizing it."¹⁰ The relativism is certainly there, but it is troublesome only for those who want to treat an independent value as though it were a dependent value. What we can do is to call attention to the things or to the aspects of things which have for us independent or intrinsic value in order to see if it will not then happen that the value is recognized. If the bias, or interest, or sensitive organization is the same or sufficiently similar, then the valued object is in practically the same relation in each case. It seems to be the slightly intolerant assumption that there is a definably normal type such that its values and preferences are normal and authoritative. This essentially academic ideal is a hard one to get rid of, especially, I suspect, for those of us whose business is teaching.

⁹ Professor Perry's article, p. 156.

¹⁰ *Loc. cit.*, p. 154.

Santayana puts the case for the cautious souls when, writing of Shelley, he says: "The question for Shelley is not at all what will look nicest in his song; that is the preoccupation of mincing rhymsters, whose well is soon dry. Shelley's abundance has a more generous source; it springs from his passion for picturing what would be best, not in the picture, but in the world."¹¹ What more important subject of discussion than what would be best in the world, and who having the mission to discuss, criticize, and examine all things would not be likely to begin by assuming that all things are subject to discussion? If, however, value depends upon relation to an interest, if it can arise only in an ego-centric situation, values that are achieved, accomplished, or arrived at depend upon a term that varies from moment to moment. The curious thing is not that people are so different, but that they are so much alike.

May not one circumstance that makes the subject of values difficult to discuss without confusion be this, that many values are such intimate things? Experience is shot through with values; they illuminate it with an iridescent subtlety; perhaps we know more about them than about anything else, more than we can easily put into words or more than we want to. It would not be surprising if the more elusive qualities of life did not lend themselves unreservedly to the method of definition.

Professor Dewey in his account of practical judgments is describing a cognitive activity, and he restricts the word cognitive in the way that is one of the characteristic features of instrumentalism. This sharper definition of cognition gives us, I believe, a really good and fruitful distinction, and the purpose of this paper is to insist upon it, noting, however, that it involves what a Hegelian might call "its Other," and that the total context, that instrumentalists so properly remind us of, is not irrelevant. The "Other" to which I chiefly attend, and to which acts of valuation refer, is not cognitive experience at all, in the sense (I think the right one) in which instrumentalists use the word. Also instrumentalism is more fairly and intelligibly stated in terms of verbs than in terms of nouns. One is reminded of James's metaphor, the flights and perchings of a bird. The perchings are no less of the total context because instrumentalists are interested chiefly in the flights. Professor Dewey states candidly that his topic is the cognitive act of evaluation, and he would (rightly, I think) like to avoid the word value altogether. He is explicit in recognizing what I call immediate, intrinsic, or independent values. "Only a prior dogma to the effect that every conscious experience is, *ipso facto*, a form of cognition leads to any obscuration of the fact, and the burden of proof is upon those who

¹¹ *Winds of Doctrine*, p. 163.

uphold the dogma."¹² But though that part of the subject to which instrumentalism applies, *viz.*, the field of cognitive evaluations, is best described in terms of verbs, the points of repose, the non-cognitive "perchings" seem to have an affinity with the more static substantives. To ask a question about non-cognitive experience, expecting in the reply a statement of that experience's cognitive aspect, is just the *petitio* that Professor Dewey will not have.

In this whole matter I have done no more than expand upon a sentence or two in Santayana's *The Sense of Beauty*: "Evidently all values must be ultimately intrinsic. The useful is good because of the excellence of its consequences; but these must somewhere cease to be merely useful in their turn, or only excellent as means; somewhere we must reach the good in itself and for its own sake, else the whole process is futile, and the utility of our first object illusory" (pp. 28-29). Also: "Values spring from the immediate and inexplicable reaction of vital impulse, and from the irrational part of our nature" (p. 19). Readers of the same author's *Reason in Art* may have been surprised that what he says about intrinsic values in the above passage from the *Sense of Beauty* receives no emphasis in the later work. Its title, however, indicates the subject-matter of cognitive valuations, whereas the earlier book dealt with the non-cognitive aspect of experience. The *Life of Reason* is a work in ethics, while the *Sense of Beauty* is a work in esthetics. Such separations exist, of course, not in life, but in literature, and so an instrumentalist might protest that it is a distinction with an intellectual purpose. All I ask, however, is that experience recognized as non-cognitive should not be given instrumentalistic responsibilities.

Now Professor Dewey, whose pages on "Judgments of Value" I have had particularly in mind, does not confuse what I have called dependent and independent values. He begins by warning us against that confusion. He observes "that contemporary discussion of values and valuation suffers from confusion of the two radically different attitudes—that of direct, active, non-cognitive experience of goods and bads, and that of valuation. . . ."¹³ He points out that "'to value' means two radically different things; to prize and to appraise; to esteem and to estimate; to find good in the sense described above (independent value) and to judge it to be good, to *know* it as good,"¹⁴ *i. e.*, to judge that it is good for reasons that can be adduced. Professor Dewey's account is complicated a little by its relation to a discussion in epistemology. He chooses, as any

¹² *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 351.

¹³ *Loc. cit.*, p. 354.

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*, p. 354.

one has a right to do, to tie the word value up to a cognitive act called valuation, but he states explicitly what he is doing, and I see no excuse for misunderstanding. But by so doing, does not the word value become synonymous, in the instrumentalist presentation, with the word use. Now if this is true, if the instrumentalist means use when he says value, why not employ the simpler word, particularly if he (and I think he is right) feels that the word value has become infected with many artificial suggestions? When a word is thus compromised, it is well to drop it if possible, and find another. Let us try the experiment of substituting the word use for the word value in the instrumentalist account and see what we get. It seems to me that we get a statement of precisely what the instrumentalist means, but a statement with which no one would disagree. "My theme is that a judgment of value is simply a case of practical judgment, a judgment about the doing of something."¹⁵ Value occurs when we face the question, What things or methods have the value of utility under the circumstances? That is, the exposition begins by limiting the values discussed to cases that are cases of judgment, in the instrumentalist's sense. I can not help feeling that when we say "use," as well as mean it, we say something equivalent to the proposition "utility is usefulness" which no instrumentalist would call a judgment at all.

In the above statement of my own, written for the most part three years ago, I attach value rather to what is not judged at all, but is independently esteemed, appreciated, or endured. This is in agreement with Aristotle's notion of the good as that with reference to which instrumentalities are selected. It is, if you like, a verbal matter, but aside from purposes of moral edification, there is as much reason for characterizing value by irresponsibility as by specific responsibility. The upshot of it all is that the problems of value, wherever we attack them, take us quickly into a region of experience, to which instrumentalism was never intended to apply, and where instrumentalists can not, as such, easily follow the lead of the subject-matter. Nor does it follow from this that rival theories of value are any better than instrumentalists think they are.

The city of Syracuse (New York) has a very beautiful institution. The state fair is held there every autumn, and on the evening of the last day there is a parade of all the city's children. The people of Syracuse regard this parade with an almost passionate affection. They begin to take their places on the curb a long time before the procession begins. It seems quite natural to say they value it supremely; to ask a citizen of Syracuse, while the children were passing, what it was good for, wherein the value of the spec-

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*, p. 358.

tacle lay, would, I fancy, seem almost blasphemous. Does value attach really to things like this or to the means used to bring them about? Of course it is a verbal question, but it is a question that takes us to considerations where instrumentalism is no longer a sufficient point of view.

WENDELL T. BUSH.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

SOCIETIES

THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

THE twenty-sixth annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, in affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was held at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on December 27, 28, and 29. Despite the absence of many members now in the service of the government, over one hundred psychologists were in attendance. The interest in applied psychology, manifested both by the formal programme and incidental discussions, was the most characteristic feature of the session, and in particular the interest in the work of psychologists for the nation at war was paramount. The presence of Major Robert M. Yerkes, chairman of the committee of examination of recruits, Professors E. L. Thorndike and W. D. Scott, chairman and director, respectively, of the committee on classification of personnel, and other psychologists active in the war work, made possible a thorough survey of the work done by the various committees appointed at the time of our advent into the war and, moreover, provided the first opportunity for the Association as a whole to approve, suggest, and cooperate with plans for future work.

The annual business meeting of the Association was held Friday afternoon, December 28. J. W. Baird, of Clark University, was elected president of the Association for the coming year. R. M. Ogden, of Cornell, and W. F. Dearborn, of Harvard, were elected members of the council to serve three years, succeeding W. D. Scott and R. P. Angier. The annual dues will be raised from \$1 to \$2. Thirty-five new members were admitted; three deaths reported. The council will decide later on the place of meeting for the next annual session. The appointment of several committees was authorized to take charge of various branches of the war service, chief among them being a committee to examine the literature of applied psychology, and one to consider the requirements of psychological examiners of recruits and other officers.